

Nursing home to be managed by county

Landmark contract to end Dec. 31

By AARON ALDRIDGE
Staff Writer

Sullivan County Health Care will be run by the county without the help of any outside consulting firms by the end of the year with the decision Thursday night not to renew the

contract with Landmark.

"The contract runs out in December and we will end the use of Landmark's director of nursing," Sullivan County Manager Ed Gil de Rubio said.

The move was made a day after nearly \$600,000 was cut from the county budget in an effort to head off another deficit in 2008.

Genesis, a private management company, was contracted in 2005 as a consultant and provided an administrator for the nursing

home. It was given a 30-day notice in June and Landmark was given a six-month contract to provide a director of nursing and an administrator.

Rebecca Trudelle has since been hired by the county as the nursing director and on Tuesday Ted Purdy started working as the new administrator.

According to Gil de Rubio, the county was paying Landmark \$80 per hour plus expenses to provide a nursing director.

Newport

The county will save that money in addition to almost \$200,000 in cuts made to the budget during a special meeting Thursday night. On Wednesday, the commissioners cut \$583,000 from the budget bringing the current total to about three-quarters of a million dollars.

"We want to start out on the right foot this time," commissioner Ethel Jarvis said. "We haven't been on the right foot. We've been on the left foot."

As part of the cuts, Gil de Rubio

recommended removing \$332,000 from the nursing salary budget with \$240,000 of that amount transferred to the agency nursing line item.

"This is in response to a change of adjusting staffing to census numbers," Gil de Rubio said.

If the change is approved it would amount to an additional savings of about \$92,000. Commissioner Jeff Barrette liked

See **COUNTY** - Page A10

COUNTY FROM PAGE A1

the idea of more cost savings, but wanted to wait and let the Purdy go over the numbers first.

"I would say in the nursing line we don't need to make any changes right now," Barrette said. "I would like to wait and let Mr. Purdy look at the budget and come back with recommendations. We did a good job cutting out the obvious stuff tonight."

But Gil de Rubio pointed out that the reduction in the nursing salary budget would not mean cuts in pay for employees or a reduction in staff.

"We're not going to have any layoffs," Gil de Rubio said.

The commission did not discuss any of the revenue side of the nursing home budget and postponed discussion until after its

regularly scheduled meeting on Dec. 4.

There was no clear answer from either Barrette or Jarvis about how much the budget may be adjusted and said Purdy and Trudelle will be working on that.

As for a projected deficit for the current fiscal year, Barrette said the commission is working to have a balanced budget.

"We're making every effort to avoid a deficit," Barrette said.

During the last fiscal year, the county posted a \$2.2 million deficit that will be part of the 2008-2009 budget.

Barrette suggested at the end of the three-hour meeting to freeze the funds they had decided

to cut.

"The funds we said we're not going to spend need to be frozen," Barrette said.

After some discussion on the matter, the commission decided to wait and bring forth the recommended cuts to the executive finance committee on Nov. 20 and ask for its needed approval.

Last month the county delegation passed a resolution limiting the amount of funds transferred within the budget to \$5,000 without prior approval of either the delegation or the finance committee.

Aaron Aldridge can be reached at (800) 545-0347 ext. 139, or by e-mail at aaldridge@eagletimes.com.